

huge math disorder or they are a liar, period. I certainly would hope that we have a math disorder on the other side that maybe we can reach out through one of the 706 social programs sponsored by the Department of Education and help those who failed in mathematics to understand. They are getting paid \$134,000 a year to serve in the U.S. Congress. They ought to be able to know an increase from a decrease, and then they ought to have the forthrightness to be truthful about it.

Mr. Speaker, the situation is this: The American people are overtaxed; Medicare has gone broke; we have a proposal to fix it. They are separate issues. Balancing the budget is a separate issue. The Speaker offered the President a balanced budget without tax cuts. The President is the one who has rejected it, not the Speaker. We are trying to work with the other side. We are not trying to fight them.

KIDS AND GUNS DO NOT MIX

(Mr. BLAGOJEVICH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BLAGOJEVICH. Mr. Speaker, permit me to gently change the subject. I would like to talk about kids and guns today.

Mr. Speaker, according to a recent study of gun deaths by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, children in the United States are 12 times more likely to die because of a firearm than children in other industrial countries. The United States had the highest gun-related child homicides and the highest rate of child suicides of 26 industrial nations in the study. There is not even a close second.

Between 1965, Mr. Speaker, and 1995, the percentage of murders committed by people under 21 in my hometown of Chicago went from 10 percent to nearly 40 percent. Over the same 30-year time span, the number of murders committed nationally by those under 21 increased fivefold. Today, 18- and 19-year-olds account for the largest percentage of violent crime arrests in the United States.

Mr. Speaker, these sobering facts can lead to only one conclusion: Kids and guns do not mix. I urge my colleagues to support my bill that would ban ownership of handguns for anyone under 21.

CHILDREN FIRST IN EDUCATION ACT

(Mr. PITTS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask my colleagues to support the Children First in Education Act, a bill which would direct 95 percent of our Federal education dollars to our local school classrooms. For too long we have been satisfied with the mediocre performance of sending from 50 to 80 percent of Federal funds to local com-

munities. That means over 20 cents, at least, of every education dollar intended for local schools gets lost in the bureaucracy. This can be improved.

Mr. Speaker, in the past few weeks, I visited with students, teachers, and administrators in schools like McCaskey High School in Lancaster City. Here I witnessed a topnotch education atmosphere, yet one which could be enhanced by getting Federal funds directly into the hands of someone who knows your child's name.

Mr. Speaker, if this act is passed, out of a total of \$15 billion federally, approximately \$3 billion more would get directly to our kids. That is more than \$70 per student per year, money which could be used for new textbooks, teachers' aides, and learning materials.

I urge my colleagues to join in sponsoring and cosponsoring the Children First in Education Act.

ARC ROAD PROGRAM BENEFITS OUR ECONOMY

(Mr. STRICKLAND asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. STRICKLAND. Mr. Speaker, I was dismayed by a letter I received yesterday from the chairman of the House Committee on the Budget. It seems that he considers the Appalachian Regional Commission's road-building program corporate welfare, saying that it is used to, quote, "link well-to-do urban centers with other well-to-do urban centers".

Now, perhaps that is the case with road-building programs in Columbus, OH, but I can assure my colleagues that, in my part of Ohio, ARC road funds are used to bring economic development and jobs to remote communities.

Other regions take good roads for granted while the Appalachian people do without. The ARC road program was a promise the Federal Government made to the American people of Appalachia in 1965. It is now 77 percent complete. It is not corporate welfare, it is basic infrastructure.

I am hopeful that the good chairman will reconsider his assertions about the worth of this essential program. We need to finish the job and to keep our commitment to the people. The taxpayers in my district want concrete results. We need pavement, not broken promises.

JUSTICE DEPARTMENT NEEDS TO ACT

(Mr. BOEHNER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, last December while I was on vacation with my family, I used my wife's cell phone to talk to some of my colleagues. A few weeks later I found that the conversation was all over the newspapers, and I had found out that a couple of Democrat activists had broken the law and

eavesdropped on my conversation, the equivalent of wiretapping. I saw them all over the television talking about how they had come to Washington and given this tape to Democrats in this House; yes, in this very House; and how just a day or two later transcripts of my private conversation wound up in the newspapers.

Mr. Speaker, I was mad, and so were some of my colleagues, and we demanded that the Justice Department get to the bottom of this matter.

Well, Mrs. Reno can move pretty quickly when she wants to. She got a grand jury together within days after a Republican committee chairman was accused by a Democrat activist of improper activities, but when it came to IRS agents snooping in our taxpayers' files or Democrats snooping in on private phone conversations or the Democrat National Committee accepting Chinese campaign checks, or the Vice President making telephone calls from the White House, she can drag her heels along with the best of them.

Mr. Speaker, TapeGate is so open and shut of a case that even Barney Fife could have solved it in a day. I have written her that I want an answer by tomorrow, and so far I have not heard a peep.

□ 1030

If we do not hear by tomorrow, we are going to have to hold the Democrats in this House accountable for what they did.

HAPPY APRIL FOOLS DAY

(Mr. DEFAZIO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, a few listening realize that Congress has extraordinary power. One of those powers is to change the calendar and the time of day during a legislative session. So the Republican leadership has declared today to be April Fools Day, if Members have been listening to the speeches.

If we take the top 1 percent of the people in this country, they own 40 percent of the wealth. They are telling us from that side of the aisle, if we take the top 1 percent who own 40 percent of the wealth in America and exempt them from all taxation, we will balance the budget. No inheritance taxes for the top 1 percent who own 40 percent of the wealth, no capital gains taxes for the top 1 percent who own 40 percent of the wealth, but we will balance the budget.

How is that? Because the little people will pay taxes. All the little people who work for those folks will pay taxes, and we will have a balanced budget.

Is it not a wonderful world? Is it not great? We have to love this country. If we exempt the wealthy from paying taxes, we will balance the budget. The problem today that we do not have a